

THE  
**FUTURE  
OF  
AMERICA'S  
NATIONAL  
PARKS**

First Annual  
Centennial Strategy for

# Canyon De Chelly National Monument

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



**Site:** CACH

**Year:** 2007

**Vision Statement**

In 1868 Canon de Chelle was incorporated within the original boundaries of the Navajo Reservation. Depicted by Spanish, Mexican, and American cartographers throughout the previous century, the labyrinth of canyons contained the homes and farms of Navajo families as well as the imposing ruins of an ancient society that inhabited the landscape countless generations before. Over time, this landscape became an object of archeological, ethnographic, and historical inquiry, each generation of scholars carefully piecing together evidence of a complex antiquity. At the same time, the traditional histories of the canyon (both Navajo and Hopi) continued through the art of storytelling. These stories recounted origins, the role of family and clan, of sleepy days in the shade of the canyon wall, and of desperate struggles with a number of determined foes. Having a forceful humanity, the storytelling tradition immeasurably enhanced professional studies and helped solidify concerns for the preservation of place. After years of cooperative effort by scholars, bureau administrators, and the Navajo people, Canyon de Chelly was established in 1931 as a different type of national monument. Rather than nudging aside original inhabitants, the monument embraced the idea that the Navajo community would remain on the land with the NPS administering remnants of ancient cultural heritage and park visitors. As vital as it was in 1931, this relationship continues to guide an intricate partnership between the National Park Service, Navajo Nation, the community of Canyon de Chelly, and - increasingly - park visitors.

This vision includes three articulated ideas. The first goes beyond the ruins and scenic vistas of the 1930s towards an integrated approach that weaves cultural, natural, and community heritage into a unified landscape perspective. When achieved, this perspective will provide a solid foundation for sustainable stewardship of park resources. By extension, the second idea calls for a renewed commitment to an interpretive strategy that discusses a spectrum of scientific and culturally embedded explanations of the canyon - a recurring conversation that visitors can actively engage. And finally, by 2016 the park must reflect a dedicated partnership between the NPS, Navajo Nation, and local canyon community - a stewardship that embraces a diversity of culture, ideas, and visions for the next 100 years, but also is working towards common goals.

**Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager**

Scott Travis, Superintendent



Site: CACH

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Improve the condition of park resources and assets.**

☒ **Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.**

As the result of a new concessions prospectus, the original Park Headquarters and Custodian's Residence will return to park management, be restored to its 1935 Mission Revival appearance, and utilized as a Community History and Interpretive Center focused on the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Canyon de Chelly's Navajo community.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.**

By 2016 Canyon de Chelly National Monument's ongoing watershed restoration program will re-establish an ecologically sustainable riparian system; preserve significant archeological and historical landscapes; protect critical habitat/natural resources; and revitalize the living community landscape of the canyon's Navajo residents. This effort includes removal and control of key invasive species (Russian Olive and tamarisk); revegetation with native species; innovative erosion control measures; utilization of both new and ancient means to harvest, conserve, and use water wisely; and sustained efforts to build a renewed commitment to the conservation of landscape, resources, and the living canyon community. Critical to success, this project is built upon both scientific and indigenous understanding of the park's landscape.

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☒ **Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.**

Three visitor related assets are targeted for comprehensive rehabilitation by 2016. These include the park's Mission 66 Visitor Center, the 92 site park campground (the only large campground within a 90 mile radius), and twelve historic canyon trails situated throughout the park. Each of these assets is inherently important to visitor experience and understanding. In addition, the park's trail system is vital for many canyon residents who live on the canyon rims, but tend farms and livestock on the canyon floor.

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Site: CACH

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Improve the condition of park resources and assets.**

☒ **Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.**

Along with the watershed restoration program, the park will actively develop monitoring, protection, preservation, and restoration strategies of a wide range of natural resources. Many of these resources, located in remote areas of the park, will require enhanced protection by park resource and ranger staff.

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☒ **Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.**

By 2016 cultural resource inventories focused on archeological resources and landscapes (estimated at 3500+ sites), roughly 500 prehistoric and historic structures, and what may be the largest assemblage of painted rock art panels in North America is complete.

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Site: CACH

ENVIRONMENT

☒ **Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.**

☒ **Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.**

By 2016 the park will have a number of key programs and demonstration programs in place to help support local community efforts aimed at improved environmental education, conservation practices, reduction of hazardous materials, and development of sustainable land management practices. Visitors will have an opportunity to evaluate the relative success of these programs through both surveys and active participation.

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Site: CACH

RECREATION

☒ Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level-federal, regional, state, local-to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

☒ Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

By 2016 Canyon de Chelly NM will rehabilitate approximately 20 miles of historic trails throughout the canyon system. These trails - used by guides, visitors, and residents alike - reflect an ancient transportation network that connected the canyon and surrounding uplands for thousands of years.

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Site: CACH

RECREATION

☒ Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

☒ Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

Over the next decade the park will expand opportunities for volunteers particularly in the areas of park scientific research, the conservation of cultural and natural resources, back country interpretive programs, and working directly with the resident Navajo community to improve canyon farms. These experiences will be designed to provide volunteers with unique experiences comparable to working in parks and protected places with indigenous communities throughout the world.

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Site: CACH

RECREATION

☒ Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

☒ Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.

Responding to intense interest by park visitors, the park will develop both daily and longer term 'field seminars' covering a range of themes and experiences. The park will become an innovator in the interpretation of American Indian landscapes, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and the remarkable complexity of the park's physical and natural resources.

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Site: CACH

EDUCATION

☒ Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

☒ Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

One of the most important park-based objectives by 2016 will be to actively engage local Navajo school children of all ages in all aspects of the park. This effort will expand upon an already successful intern program with Dine' College and include class-room curriculum materials, teaching opportunities for park staff, and on-line materials that encourage personal exploration of the park. A further innovation will be the creation of the Canyon de Chelly Summer Field Camp - an opportunity for children from beyond the reservation to interact with Navajo children in a field camp setting within Canyon de Chelly.

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PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Model what it means to work in partnership.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

X Other Goals. Perhaps the most challenging objective the park now faces is how to build a more seamless, cohesive, and meaningful working relationship between the National Park Service, the Navajo Nation, and the local canyon community. Reflecting very different perspectives regarding the role of the NPS, the desired economic benefit of the park, and what resource conservation means, these partners will need to overcome cultural and institutional differences and arrive at some common ground. Understanding difference and accommodating diversity will be essential tools in 'modeling' the next stage of this very complex partnership.

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